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Conference Abstract

Edifice Complex: Managing Risk During Construction

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Abstract

As the museum building serves a critical role in preventive conservation, its maintenance and repair represent important measures to ensure the safekeeping of cultural heritage. Construction projects can be key to the long-term preservation of the building, and in turn advance the need for collection care, but the construction process itself introduces risk from a variety of sources. Moreover, safety concerns related to building projects often restrict access to portions of the building, complicating the work of museum professionals who have a responsibility for preserving collection material but may not be directly involved in day-to-day construction activities. What are the problems of most potential destruction to building contents, and where can planning make a world of difference in reducing risk?

This presentation presents an overview of the construction process, using a critical path schedule as an introduction for people who've not participated in a capital project. Discussion will identify how risk changes according to the phase of construction, where work increases the vulnerability of collection material and what measures can be taken early in a project to manage these factors. The presenters will focus on fire protection during construction, referencing published reports about incidents of damage and their causes, then connecting this data to challenges unique to museum projects. Budgets and museum professionals' time should be directed toward mitigating damage based on a risk assessment built upon data that exists from multiple sources within the construction industry.

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